

JUNE 18, 1987

Two weeks ago, the National Wool Grower's Assn. sent me a letter asking for a donation to help finance lobbying against wool imports. Some plenty hefty woolie operators were lending their names to the project. Heavyweights who had done a lot of good work in Washington to help save the sheep industry. Influential hombres that I didn't want to offend by admitting that I'd already spent my wool check ahead of time on such serious ventures as a monkey counting trip to the West Indies and a several-week study of the tides and climates on the resort islands off the East Coast.

So I concocted a reply explaining that as soon as a short inner-office audit revealed what I had left over from the drouths that ended in 1986 and the floods that had started in May of 1987, I'd wire them some money, or come up and work out my part doing odd jobs around the association headquarters.

Imported wool sure does work well to keep the domestic market cooled off. The Aussies and the New Zealand interests keep a big store of their fiber in a bonded warehouse in North Carolina, I think it is. Any time they need a little cash, or the price suits them, they have plenty of baled wool ready to throw on the market.

Down here in the Shortgrass Country, we have to shear in the spring and sell as fast as we can to mop up the winter's feed bills that the banks have been paying. We have a world famous wool clip and the most popular marketing procedures among the wool buyers of any spot in the sheep raising country.

Along with a wool check, we also get a wool incentive payment from the tariff that's collected on imports. Last week I got into an argument with one of my neighbors who runs straight cattle. He was claiming that my incentive check was the same as taking welfare, because the check was drawn against the U.S. Treasury.

Well, I told him that I agreed. The wool incentive was for the welfare of the United States of America to keep our country in good, honest, upright sheepmen and to maintain the integrity of agriculture. Furthermore, I'd as soon he pay his part direct to help save on the administrative costs. Before we could really get heated up, his two dogs jumped out of the pickup and took after a jackrabbit and saved a serious fuss.

Be just like that hollow horn rancher to keep blabbing around about our incentive until some busybody investigates the matter. It's tough luck that no one cares to pay any incentive to cow herders. I guess that settles the argument as to who is the most important to the country.